



WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

RE: GOVERNOR MALLOY'S PROPOSED BUDGET

The CT Metro-North Rail Commuter Council, a creation of your body 26 years ago, has strong concerns about Governor Malloy's proposed budget for the Department of Transportation.

While the 115,000 daily riders of Metro-North in Connecticut have been asked to pay a 5.25% fare increase effective 1/1/12, and will pay similar fare hikes in 2013 and 2014, a review of the budget shows that money is not being spent on the trains.

OPM has concocted a budget that will spend \$9.89 million less on rail operations in 2013 than in the previous year, despite a revenue increase of \$9.22 million because of the fare hike. In other words, the fare increase is just offsetting previous subsidies and those new funds from the fare increase will flow into the Special Transportation Fund.

We all know that the Special Transportation Fund is hardly the "lock box" it was hoped to be. Nor are the funds there spent only on mass transit, but also on roads and bridges.

Riders on Metro-North already pay the highest rail fares of any commuter line in the United States, because the subsidy is the lowest. For the Department of Transportation to seek a fare hike, complaining of rising costs, and then see those funds be spent on anything but the trains, is wrong.

The proposed budget shows that fare increase is no more than a tax on commuters, not a fund raising effort to provide better services.

The Commuter Council has endorsed State Representative Gail Lavielle's proposed HB 5067 (attached) which would guarantee that mass transit fare hikes be spent on mass transit. We hope that bill will receive a full and fair hearing.

JIM CAMERON / Chairman

CT Rail Commuter Council

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